

POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL 2010 - 2011

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVENTURE HANDBOOK



1932-2010
CELEBRATING 78 YEARS
OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVENTURE HANDBOOK

*"Jump into the middle of things, get your hands dirty, fall flat on your face,
and then reach for the stars."*
Joan L. Curcio

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THE GUIDES

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."
Mark Van Doren

Mr. Brigham - *Dynamite Gifted and Talented Teacher and Technology Teacher*

You will see Mr. Brigham "Leading the Way" in shop class. He's a wealth of knowledge and is as nice as can be.

Mr. Brown - *Delightful 6th Grade English Teacher*

Besides running the Gardening Program and the school newspaper, Mr. Brown is back in the classroom teaching 6th grade language arts. He knows his stuff and is looking forward to helping sharpen your skills.

Mrs. Calandrello - *Nurturing Nurse*

She loves to help and is incredibly sharp when it comes to diagnosing how to help you get better.

Mr. Cioffi - *Phenomenal 5th and 6th Grade Math Teacher*

He loves math and the Mets. He is an energetic and true blue New Yorker. You will "hit the dish" again this year.

Mr. Cook - *Pocantico's Own "Science Guy"*

He knows his science, from rocks to the periodic table. Mr. Cook loves to sail, scuba dive, and, of course, talk science.

Mrs. DiMartino - *Exceptional English Teacher*

She can teach, inspire, and help you create your best writing. She will introduce you to works of literature that you will remember for a lifetime.

Mrs. Flannery - *Magnificent Social Studies Teacher*

She loves kids, the Jets, and jogging, and knows her American history. You will enjoy plenty of group work, and she will challenge your thinking and make you laugh.

Ms. Garrido - *Remarkable 5th and 6th Grade Social Studies Teacher*

You'll have lots of enriching projects throughout the year. She knows a ton about the Americas, ancient civilizations, and softball, too.

Mrs. Hongell - *National Award-Winning Computer Teacher*

She will help you create presentations, navigate the internet, and support your classroom projects. She is as "user friendly" as they come.

Mr. Linehan - *Fabulous Physical Education Instructor*

He is, without a doubt, an outstanding athlete and coach who loves his Giants and Mets. You will also see him working with Mr. McVeigh and the Society of Guardian Angels.

Mr. Lucadamo - *Masterful Musician and Band Leader*

Learn from him and you will become the best musician you can be. Catch his love of music - can you put as much effort into the band as he does?

Mrs. Mancini - *Spanish Teacher Extraordinaire*

When you enter her class, you will speak, write, and appreciate Spanish. She has a big heart, enjoys kids, and loves a good laugh.

Ms. McCarthy - *Magnificent Speech Teacher*

She can make speech so much fun that you don't even know you're learning. You will always see her working with kids.

Mrs. McCann - *Enthusiastic Physical Education Instructor, Play Director, and Mentoring Leader*

She does all of this and much more here at Pocantico, leading by example with her heart of gold.

Mrs. McDougal - *Fantastic Special Educator*

She will help you stay on track in such a caring way. She will help you before class, in class, and after class. She is World Class.

Mr. McVeigh - *Helpful Guidance Counselor*

When you need someone to talk to, he's "the man." He loves to help and is great in a crisis. Close to his heart are his Mets and the Society of Guardian Angels.

Mrs. Morotti - *Amazing Art Teacher*

You will explore art in new and wonderful ways. Walk into her art room and you will never want to leave.

Dr. Palombo - *Heavenly Reading and Home and Careers Instructor*

She teaches remedial reading, runs the student government, bakes with the best, and chaperones field trips.

Ms. Peterson - *Outstanding 5th and 6th Grade Special Educator*

She is warm, caring, and can help you overcome any obstacle. She is a great teacher, but also a great runner and basketball player.

Mrs. Pietrangelo - *Out-Of-This-World 5th and 6th Grade English Teacher*

She is new to us this year and ready to specialize in the subject she loves the best. She explains perfectly everything you will need to know and is just so nice.

Mrs. Price-Gordon - *Lovely and Knowledgeable Librarian*

She knows the library like the back of her hand. Step through the door and enter the magical world of literature and resources.



Mrs. Quinn - *Energetic Special Education Assistant*

She wants you to achieve and do your best. She will put a smile on your face with her wit and keep you on your toes.

Ms. Sable - *Wonderful French Teacher*

She will share her love of France and the French culture, so get ready to have some fun. In addition to everything French, she loves to sing - wow, can she belt out a tune!

Ms. Stanton - *Virtuoso Music Teacher*

She knows her music, from Gershwin to U2. In addition to all the singing, you'll learn how to understand and even create music. She loves to sing, smile, and laugh, and you will too.

Ms. Smith - *Calm and Patient Teaching Assistant*

She will help you in the classroom, the resource room, and any other place you need her. She loves children and loves to support your efforts.

Mr. Stutz - *Inspirational Math Teacher*

He loves to challenge and engage you so, you'd better be on your toes. He also plays a mean game of tennis and loves chess.

Mr. Suarez - *Insightful 5th and 6th Grade Science Teacher and Coach*

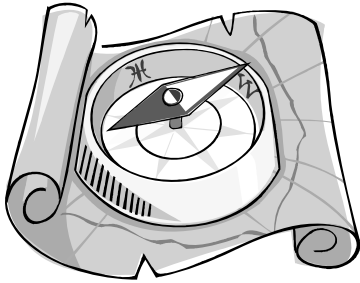
He is here this year to help you learn to explore the world of science. He will tell you just what you need to know to do your best.

Mrs. Vail - *Compassionate School Psychologist*

She is a super listener who really understands how you feel. Her door is always open and she knows how to help.

Mrs. Zerbo - Life-Saving Library Aide

She wants to help both teachers and students alike. Be sure to seek her out when you can't find what you need.



COURSE DIRECTORY

*"To live effectively is to live with adequate information."
Norbert Weiner*

BAND

Part of your journey through middle school hopefully will involve further musical experiences. As part of the band, you will receive both lessons and band rehearsal time during the school day. In addition, you will be expected to practice on your own to improve your skills. Attendance at the winter and spring concerts is a blast and is mandatory for all band members. Failure to attend these major concert events without an approved absence will result in a suspension from the band until the next concert.

5th GRADE BAND

The 5th grade band meets weekly and performs during the Intermediate House concert. Students also have weekly scheduled lessons.

6th GRADE BAND

The 6th grade band meets twice a week and performs during the winter concert, the spring concert, in the Memorial Day parade, and at graduation. Advanced students audition for the All-County Band in January. Students have weekly scheduled lessons.

7th and 8th GRADE BAND

The 7th and 8th grade band is a continuation of the 6th grade band program, while also playing progressively more difficult musical pieces. Besides the scheduled concerts, the band periodically participates at the New York State School Music Association Evaluation Festival and always seems to come home with a medal.

ENGLISH

5th GRADE ENGLISH

5th grade English, taught through the rich variety of fiction and non-fiction literature, will often dovetail their social studies explorations. Students will also expand their writing techniques through mini-lessons on a variety of important strategies and techniques, as well as



challenging and creative assignments that reinforce them. Emphasis will be placed on vocabulary and sentence development, in addition to organization and detail. A state assessment in English Language Arts is given in May.

6th GRADE ENGLISH

In addition to exploring enriching literature from a variety of genres related to the 6th grade theme of "Growth, Change, and Differences," literature will be read in conjunction with social studies units on ancient civilizations, cultures of the eastern hemisphere, and medieval times. Students will use the writing process to develop rich narratives, extended essays, poems, and other reports, as well as study vocabulary, grammar and usage, and spelling throughout the year. A state assessment in English Language Arts is given in May.



7th GRADE ENGLISH

Building on a foundation in grammar previously introduced, students progress to a concentration on specific tools for writing and revising. Special emphasis is placed on independent and subordinate clauses, more varied and complex sentence structure, and sentence combining. Mechanics and usage are reinforced; new spelling and vocabulary are introduced. Literature encompasses thematically selected novels, short stories, non-fiction, drama, and poetry. The writing component of the course focuses on the development of a five-paragraph essay, as well as the creation of original pieces. An extended writing project requires students to select and research a current events issue, prepare a thesis statement, cite works referenced, and present an organized and persuasive viewpoint. A state assessment in English Language Arts is given in May.

8th GRADE ENGLISH

Refining communication in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking is the main emphasis of this course. Sharpening grammar skills already learned, students continue to expand their knowledge of spelling and vocabulary. Proper use of antecedents, accurate agreement of subjects and verbs, and the appropriate placement of modifiers assist students in their ability to write for a variety of purposes. The use of graphic organizers and pre-writing strategies are stressed as students create their written responses to literature. Self-criticism and editing, as well as peer/teacher conferencing enable students to examine thematic connections in a variety of genres. Students become aware of authors' literary devices and learn to analyze the structure of a piece of writing in addition to appreciating it for its literary value. A combined English/social studies research report provides students with the opportunity of investigating in depth a topic of their choice using a variety of sources. A state assessment in English Language Arts is given in May.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

5th and 6th GRADE SPANISH and FRENCH

Communicative competence will be developed using the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students will be able to discuss personal identification, clothing, parts of the body, likes and dislikes, and family members. In addition, students will learn to narrate, revise, retell, and create stories through the use of Total Physical Response Storytelling.

7th GRADE SPANISH and FRENCH

Communicative competence will continue to be emphasized. There will be a review of the present tense and the present progressive tense, and reflexive irregular and stem-changing verbs will be introduced. Students will be able to discuss their houses, towns, daily schedules, meals, favorite sports, pastimes, nationalities, and Spanish or French speaking countries. Storytelling will continue to be used to expand vocabulary. This course culminates in a school final exam.

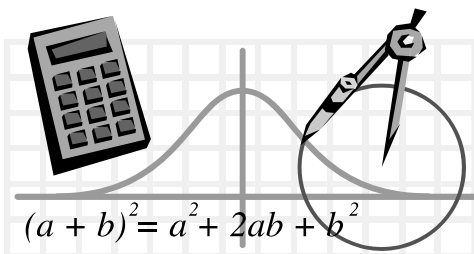
8th GRADE SPANISH and FRENCH

There is a review of the present and present progressive tenses. The preterit tense and all of its exceptions will be introduced. Students will learn the direct and indirect object pronouns. All of this will be done with a communicative approach. Total Physical Response Storytelling will be expanded and the students will read novels appropriate to their skill level. This course culminates in a final exam.

MATHEMATICS

5th GRADE MATH

By the end of grade five, students increase their facility with the four basic arithmetic operations applied to fractions and decimals and learn to add and subtract positive and negative numbers. They know and use common measuring units to determine length and area and know and use formulas to determine the volume of simple geometric figures. Students know the concept of angle measurement and use a protractor and compass to solve problems. They use grids, tables, graphs, and charts to record and analyze data.



6th GRADE MATH

6th grade math classes are heterogeneously grouped and focus on both the continuing mastery of skills started in the younger grades and the introduction of new concepts. Topics covered in 6th grade math include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers, fractions and decimals. Also

covered are estimating answers and mental solutions to problems, numeration to the hundred-thousands place, prime and composite numbers, and geometry concepts with respect to perimeter, circumference, area and volume. Students will also learn units of measurement, ratios and percents, probability, adding and subtracting integers, and the graphing of ordered pairs. A state assessment in mathematics is given in May.

7th GRADE GENERAL MATH

This course covers topics required by the New York State Education Department. These topics include basic operations, ratio, proportion, geometry, probability, statistics, and pre-algebra. A state assessment in mathematics is given in May.

7th GRADE ACCELERATED MATH

This course is intended for those students who are interested in taking Integrated Algebra in 8th grade and covers all of the 7th grade and 8th grade general math curricula. A state assessment in mathematics is given in May and the course culminates in a school final exam.

Prerequisite: Final course average of 93 or higher in 6th grade math and teacher recommendation

8th GRADE PRE-ALGEBRA

This course covers 8th grade topics required by the State Education Department. 7th grade topics are reviewed and expanded. New topics include: the Pythagorean Theorem, the use of sine, cosine, and tangent, relations, functions, graphing, transformations, and constructions. Special attention is placed on problem solving. A state assessment in mathematics is given in May.

8th GRADE INTEGRATED ALGEBRA

This is the first course in an integrated sequence of mathematical study that covers topics in logic, algebra, geometry, probability, and statistics. Traditional integrated algebra work is covered and expanded upon. Problem-solving skills and concepts are emphasized. A state assessment in mathematics is given in May. This course culminates in a state Regents exam given in June.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of 7th Grade Accelerated Math with a grade of at least 85 and teacher recommendation

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



6th-8th GRADE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

These twice-a-week physical education classes are designed to increase students' knowledge and skill level in team sports, develop lifetime activities, practice coeducational games, and develop a higher level of

physical fitness. There is also time during recess to sign up for and play a range of different team sports and games.

SCIENCE

5th GRADE SCIENCE

5th grade students will be engaged in science topics ranging from light and sound, to how muscles in the body work. We will also extensively study our solar system, including an exciting trip to the Challenger Learning Center.

6th GRADE SCIENCE

This course focuses on topics about energy, force, and simple machines. It also covers important earth science and physical science units. Class activities consist of laboratory experiments and discussions. Special emphasis is placed on the scientific method. Students are required to submit a project each quarter.

7th GRADE GENERAL LIFE SCIENCE

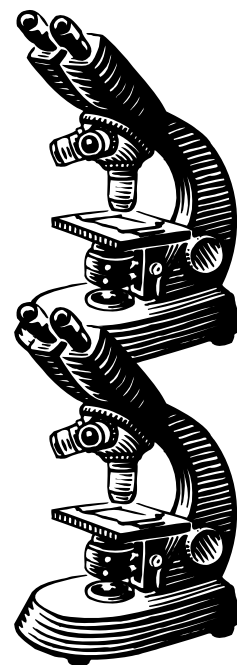
This 7th grade course focuses on the study of all living things. This includes simple organisms, plants, animals, human biology, heredity, adaptation, and ecology. Laboratory experiences are an important part of this course and students are given a chance to do dissections and microscope work. This course culminates in a school final exam.

7th GRADE ACCELERATED LIFE SCIENCE

This fast-paced accelerated 7th grade course focuses on the study of all living things, with an emphasis on higher level thinking skills. This includes simple organisms, plants, animals, human biology, heredity, adaptation, and ecology. Laboratory experiences are an important part of this course and students are given a chance to do dissections and microscope work. This course culminates in a school final exam.

8th GRADE PHYSICAL SCIENCE

This 8th grade course focuses on the two main branches of physical science: chemistry and physics. Students work on the tools of measurement, the diversity of matter, the physical properties of matter, and the periodic table. In addition, students study motion, force, electricity, heat energy, magnetism, and simple machines. This course culminates in a state assessment in June.



8TH GRADE REGENTS EARTH SCIENCE

This high school level course focuses on the different processes that shape the earth utilizing a hands-on lab approach to learning. The units covered include the study of weather, astronomy, geology, and processes that shape the earth. This course culminates in a state Regents exam in June.

Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation and acceptance into Integrated Algebra

SOCIAL STUDIES

5th GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

This year is centered around the Americas. Special areas of focus include Canada, Latin America, and an overview of American history.



6th GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

In social studies, students will explore world history and ancient cultures of the eastern hemisphere, as well as geography and map skills. Primary sources and current events will also be emphasized.

7th GRADE AMERICAN HISTORY

This course presents a chronological narrative of US history from the Native Americans to the roots of the Civil War. There is also a geography section. The course focuses on skill development, including essay writing, primary source analysis, and critical thinking skills. This course culminates in a school final exam.



8th GRADE AMERICAN HISTORY

This course continues the chronological narrative of American history from the Civil War to the present day. There is also a continuation and refinement of the skill development begun in 7th grade. A combined English/social studies research report provides students with the opportunity to investigate in depth a topic of their choice using a variety of sources. This course culminates in a final exam.

SPECIAL EDUCATION



Students working with Ms. Peterson in 5th and 6th grade, or with Mrs. McDougal in 7th and 8th grade, will have the middle school curriculum reinforced and elaborated upon. New study skills and learning strategies will be introduced and practiced. Ms. Peterson, Mrs. Quinn, Mrs. McDougal and Ms. Smith will also “push-in” to support instruction in the regular education classes.

CRITERIA FOR ACCELERATION IN MATH AND SCIENCE

In order for a student to gain a recommendation from his/her math or science teacher to enroll in 7th Grade Accelerated Math and 7th Grade Accelerated Life Science, there are several criteria that each teacher looks for. These criteria include:

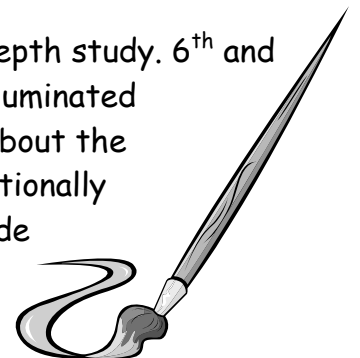
1. Final 6th grade course average of 93 or higher
2. Demonstration of qualities important for success in the program such as:
 - the desire to work beyond teacher expectations
 - taking advantage of opportunities to be challenged
 - assuming responsibility without direction
 - planning and organizing time effectively
 - demonstrating strong study skills
 - meeting all deadlines in a timely fashion
 - developing, applying, and understanding abstract reasoning
 - demonstrating mature behavior
 - demonstrating consistent effort
 - having good attendance

In general, a successful experience in accelerated math and science is viewed as one resulting in an 85 average or better in both classes. Science and math teachers use these grades as criteria for a recommendation of continued enrollment in 8th Grade Integrated Algebra and 8th Grade Regents Earth Science. It should also be noted that students are required to be accelerated in both courses.

ROTATION CLASSES

6th-8th GRADE ART

The art rotation in middle school focuses on one aspect of art for an in-depth study. 6th and 7th grade students have studied such areas in the past as stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, tile murals, print making and sculpture. The goal is to learn about the history of art and also to produce original artwork. 8th graders have traditionally created a painting in the manner of the great masters. During the 8th grade art show in the spring, these works are displayed for the entire school.



6th GRADE COMPUTER

During this rotation class, students will learn about search engines and the evaluation of websites. They will also be introduced to MS Publisher. As a culminating project, they will choose an ancient civilization (Egypt, Greece, or Rome). Then, using research from the internet, electronic sources, and print material, they will work in pairs to create a newsletter from that time period written from the perspective of that time period. During this process, they'll learn about document layout including working with headlines, text and image frames, and columns.



7th GRADE COMPUTER

7th grade students will do a variety of activities during their rotation class. They will spend time learning different strategies for searching for information on the internet. They will review word processing, spreadsheet software, photo editing software, and they will become familiar with one of the new Web 2.0 tools - the wiki. They will also learn how to create a personal database.

8th GRADE COMPUTER

During the 8th grade computer rotation, students will work in pairs to create a retail company that will market a product the students select. They will design a business brochure, business card, company logo, company slogan, flyer, letterhead, and a website to market that product. They will also use a video camera to create a short commercial spot for their product; if they choose, they may also create a podcast to promote the product. Students will use MS PowerPoint, MS Publisher, MS Word, MS Front Page, and other software products to complete their projects. Students will become familiar with a video camera and video editing software. Students will examine websites, logos, and slogans of major corporations in preparation for their own designs.

6th GRADE MUSIC

6th graders will have the opportunity to view and analyze performances by peers, celebrities, and their class as a whole. They will study how sound effects enhance movies, songs, story telling, studying and exercise. As a class, students will explore, learn, and perform music by composers from around the world. Students will also compose and perform their own pieces.



7th GRADE MUSIC

Buckle your safety belts as we travel back to the foundation of music in America. Students will learn early folk songs and their origins. Students will study Jazz music, the first truly American genre of music. 7th graders will also engage in discussions of popular music of today. Students will be invited to perform or share a piece written by an American composer and identify musical elements studied in class.

8th GRADE MUSIC

During this music rotation students will discuss and analyze musical effects in a variety of genres. Students will work cooperatively and independently to analyze songs. Students will be responsible for analyzing the musical elements and lyrics in a song of their choice. The final project for each class will be to examine the process of album production in the music industry and compile songs to create a class CD.

6th-8th GRADE TECHNOLOGY

"Project Lead the Way" is an activity-oriented middle school curriculum—a program designed to help students in grades six through eight explore math, science, and technology. Project Lead the Way harnesses the enthusiasm and energy of middle school students while showing students how to use engineering skills to solve everyday problems. Students won't ask, "Will I ever have to use this in real life?" because they will be applying their skills as they learn them. The primary focus is on stronger math, science, and technology inquiry skills.



6th-8th GRADE HOME AND CAREERS

This course gives students the opportunity to learn important life skills. Students will discuss different career options with Mr. McVeigh, as well as learn about nutrition while sharpening their culinary talents with Dr. Palombo.

6th-8th GRADE HEALTH

During their time in health class students will cover a wide range of topics that include planning for a healthy lifetime and learning about the body and its different systems. Attitudes and behaviors regarding decision making, life skills, and health are also stressed. There are also units on drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.



THE TERRAIN

"Not many of us are able to be the best at anything but all of us are capable of doing our best in everything."

Dennis Myo

YOUR MISSION

You are entering the world of middle school. Welcome. You are no longer a child and you are not yet ready to be an adult. This is the "middle part" of your journey to high school, college and beyond. During middle school you will be expected to grow academically and socially. You will have three new goals to focus yourself during your middle school years: **You are to try to distinguish yourself academically, socially, or artistically. You are to grow into a responsible person, and you are to begin to give back to your community.**

COURSE OF STUDY

In middle school, you are required by New York State to take five academic subjects: English, math, science, social studies, and a foreign language.

Again this year, you will go directly to your locker and then to your first period class.

Rotation classes will be held 4th period. In 4th period rotation you will spend six or seven weeks in one of six different subject areas. You will spend one rotation in each of the following subjects: health, computer, music, home and careers, technology, and art.

The school day is over at 2:45 for students not involved in chorus, working detention, behavioral detention or sports practice. This schedule will still allow you to have a double period in one of your five core academic subjects each school day. If you are not involved in the music program but are staying for sports, working detention, or behavioral detention, you will report to the study hall room.

In 5th and 6th grade you will be tested periodically throughout the year, but you will not have a midterm or final exam. In 7th and 8th grade, you will take midterm exams and final exams. New York State also requires that 5th through 8th graders take state English and math assessments in April and May respectively. Additionally in 8th grade, students will take state assessments in science. Pay attention to your "guides" and you will be well prepared to do your best.

ABSENCE AND TARDINESS

Regular school attendance is **crucial to your academic progress and success**. If you are ill, you should have your parent call the school nurse or the school office in the morning (before 9 am) **every morning** that you are not attending school. You should be in school at 8:15 each morning and in your classroom by 8:20. There are consequences for being consistently late. Please see the discipline code at the back of this handbook.

BUS RIDE PROCEDURES

On the school bus it is crucial that you behave in an orderly and respectful manner so as not to distract the driver and endanger other students. You are expected to follow the same code of conduct that governs your behavior in the school building itself.



In addition to the regular 3:30pm afternoon bus, we provide a sports/activity bus at 5:15pm for middle school students.

Before you can stay for swimming in June and ride the late bus, you need to give Mrs. McIntyre a written note from your parents giving you permission to stay and use the pool.

HEALTH SERVICES

If you need to take a medication in school, your parents must send in a signed permission note for Mrs. Calandrello along with the medication. Otherwise, she will not be able to give it to you.

CAFETERIA

The cafeteria staff works hard to make tasty and healthy meals. Once you go through the line, you must stay in your seat until you get permission to get up and leave. This way the cafeteria can be a calm place for everyone to eat his or her lunch. There is no reason to have food in the hall or in your classrooms. You must also clean your lunch table each day, as it is your responsibility to keep your space clean wherever you find yourself in our building.

LOCKERS AND DESKS

Organizational skills begin with your locker and desk. Before homeroom, you will need to go to your locker and select the materials you need for your morning classes. After lunch, you need to select the materials you need for your afternoon classes.

Remember, while you are assigned your own locker, all lockers and desks are school property and are subject to inspection and search by the principal.

TELEPHONE

You must ask permission to use any phone in the building. A public telephone is available to students for after-school use. It is located outside of Mrs. Calandrello's office.

TEXTBOOKS

At the end of the year you have to return all your books. Taking care of your books is an important and potentially costly responsibility. Your American History textbook, for example, is going for a mere \$49.95.



IPODS, CD PLAYERS, CAMERAS, MP3 PLAYERS, AND CELL PHONES

We are aware that on some days you might have a long bus ride, so iPod-type equipment with headphones is permitted on the bus. We also feel that your recess should be your time to unwind, so we will also allow you to use them there.

However, that is where we draw the line. We do not want to see them in the cafeteria or anywhere else in school. Headphones should be out of sight, not around your neck in the hallway. If you bring a cell phone or camera into the school, **it must remain in your backpack or your locker. It must be turned off.** You may not use a camera of any kind or the camera feature of another device in the building without the specific permission of a teacher or administrator for a specific purpose. In addition, please remember that any device you bring to school, you bring at your own risk and the school is not responsible if it is lost or broken. Adults will confiscate this equipment if it is not used appropriately.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills are an important part of our school safety plan. During fire drills you must exit the building quickly, quietly, and safely, with no running or talking. We expect and need your cooperation so that we can become efficient at responding to all types of emergency situations.

CLASS TRIPS

Great news! While in the middle school you will get a chance to:

- Visit some of the world famous museums in New York City
- Use your foreign language outside of school
- Go on a weekend camping retreat
- Go on a 7th grade trip
- Go on an 8th grade overnight trip



However, please remember that trips are a privilege, not a right, and that every time you leave Pocantico Hills School, **you are the representative of Pocantico Hills to the outside world.** You need to be on your best behavior.

YOUR MAP



"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure."

Colin L. Powell

CLASS ATTENDANCE

You are expected to arrive on time and fully prepared. You need to use the three-minute travel time for bathroom and drink needs only.

HALL PASSES

If you think you will be late to class, you need to get a pass first. Also, if you need to speak to a counselor or teacher, you must report to your assigned class or study hall first, before you keep your appointment. Otherwise you will be considered to be skipping class.

HOMEWORK

When you get to high school, you will be required to pass exams in five Regents subjects to earn a diploma from New York State. These higher learning standards are a challenge that you need to begin to prepare for now.

Homework is an important activity for the review and practice of new information. In addition, it constitutes 10% of your grade each quarter. If you do not have your homework the next day in class, or if your homework quality is unacceptable to your teacher, you will fill out a homework slip and be expected to stay and complete your assignment during a Working Detention. This will take place during study hall from 2:45 to 3:30 every day. If you skip a Working Detentions to which you are assigned, you will then be assigned a behavioral detention. If you receive five working detentions during a marking period, this will become a Behavioral Detention, and you will be required to create a "Habits of Mind" plan to organize your time better. If you receive ten Working Detentions during the marking period, you may be in need of extra help; therefore you will be required to attend five mandatory study skill sessions during 9th period where you will receive help with your study skills. Consistently missing homework not only will lower your grade, but will likely lead to parent contact and further consequences. Learning to be responsible takes practice and effort and we are here to help you learn this most important skill.

If you haven't learned it yet, learn it now:

**PAYING ATTENTION IN CLASS + DOING YOUR HOMEWORK
= SCHOOL SUCCESS!**

MAKE-UP WORK

When you are ill, you will not receive a homework slip if you return to school without having completed the work that was assigned in your absence. The only exception to this would be a long-term project due on the day of your return. However, it is your responsibility to check with your teacher and develop a make-up plan.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home every ten weeks to give you and your parents feedback on how you are doing in each class.

Please return the report card envelope signed by one of your parents to your homeroom teacher within five school days after receiving it so we know your parents have seen the report card.

Grades should come as no surprise to you or your parents. You should be sharing your quiz, test, and homework grades with your parents on a daily basis. If you are not happy with any one grade in a subject area, remember that report cards are great starting points for setting new goals for yourself for the next marking period!

PARENT CONFERENCES

A Parent Teacher Conference Day is scheduled during the fall of each year around the end of the first marking period. Ask your parents or guardians to attend because it is important for them to meet your teachers and to be informed of your progress. What your parents talk about with your teachers is not a secret and should come as no surprise to you.

HOW QUARTERLY AVERAGES ARE CALCULATED

The five major subject areas of math, science, social studies, English, and foreign language are all totaled and count for 80% of the quarterly average. The special areas of physical education, band, chorus, and the rotation grades are totaled and count for 20% of the quarterly average. Please note that three rotation grades are calculated to be part of the 2nd quarter while three others are calculated to be part of the 4th quarter averages, even though students are working through-out the year. Students in the accelerated math and science programs in 8th grade have their grades weighted by multiplying their grade by 1.1.



HONOR ROLL

At Pocantico Hills, we celebrate the success of our students in many different ways. Honor Roll and High Honor Roll is determined for each quarter of the school year.

To qualify for the Honor Roll: Your overall average must be at least 85% and you may not have any grade below 80% in any subject.

To qualify for High Honor Roll: Your overall average must be at least 90% and you may not have any grade below 85% in any subject.

At the end of each quarter, Mr. Steele invites every student on either the Honor Roll or the High Honor Roll to a special get-together.

SOCIETY OF GUARDIAN ANGELS

The Guardian Angels program will be back this year at Pocantico Hills! This program is based on the simple belief that every student needs to feel safe and secure everyday here at Pocantico Hills. All Guardian Angels and all adults in the building are committed to creating a safe school community. Help us make this belief a reality for every student.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The National Junior Honor Society is a very special distinction at our school, reserved for our most outstanding students. A National Junior Honor Society selection committee meets in the spring to consider candidates who meet the following four high standards:

- **SCHOLARSHIP** - You must achieve the Honor or High Honor Roll for three consecutive quarters or five out of the past seven quarters.
- **CITIZENSHIP/SERVICE** - You must have performed at least 10 hours of community service by the selection date and an additional 10 hours by June of the selection year.
- **LEADERSHIP** - You must be able to articulate in a meaningful manner ways in which you formally or informally have set a positive standard for other students to follow. The successful National Junior Honor Society candidate is a student looked up to by both faculty and fellow students.
- **CHARACTER** - This is probably the most difficult criterion to define. The student of good character upholds principles of morality and ethics, is cooperative, demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability, shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others, and generally maintains a good and clean lifestyle.



If you are a potential National Junior Honor Society member, you will be notified in late fall and will be encouraged to submit a letter of application highlighting the above characteristics along with documentation of your citizenship/service activity. The school counselor will approve the community service requirement. It will be a challenge, but we hope you strive to include this distinction as part of your middle school adventure.

COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Part of growing up includes taking a greater interest in improving the world around you. In this spirit, the middle school graduation requirement is that every student performs a minimum of 10 hours of community service by June 1 of each of the middle school years. You will get forms from Mr. McVeigh to meet this important graduation requirement. If your goal is to receive a Community Service Award during the Honor Roll Dinner in May, your community service hours must be submitted before the Dinner.

DIPLOMAS

Students who take off with the idea of community service and volunteer a minimum of 25 hours a year during each of their three middle school years will receive a special **Diploma with Distinction** at graduation. These forms must be turned in by June 1 of each school year in order to meet the requirement.

In addition to the Diploma with Distinction, there are two additional types of academic diplomas that recognize exceptional academic merit. The first is the **Diploma of Outstanding Achievement** for students who achieve a three-year average of 90% or better. There's also the **Diploma with Excellence** for students with a three-year average of 95% or better. Set your goals high beginning today!

YOUR TOOLS



"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."

Thomas Jefferson

ATTITUDE

The most important tool you bring to school every day is your **attitude**. Your attitude invites a positive or negative response from the people around you. If you choose to bring a "bad attitude" to school, school will be neither a fun nor an interesting place. However, if you bring a "good attitude" to school (pay attention to your teachers, do your best work, try to get along with your classmates), the sky's the limit! So be strong. Rise above minor disappointments. Put a smile on your face. Be kind to your classmates and school will be an exciting, challenging, fascinating, intriguing, mysterious, exhilarating, inspiring, and stirring experience!

STUDY SKILLS

In middle school you will learn from a new and fresh curriculum in each of your subject areas. But you will also be learning something else equally important - **how to be a productive student**. Each of your teachers will be instructing you on how to get organized before class, how to take notes, how to write papers, how to prepare for tests, how to listen for key points in class discussion, how to organize your notes and papers, how to remember when your homework is due. Paying attention to these important suggestions will help ensure success, both this year and in the years to come. Make it your goal this year to learn both new curricula and new study skills.

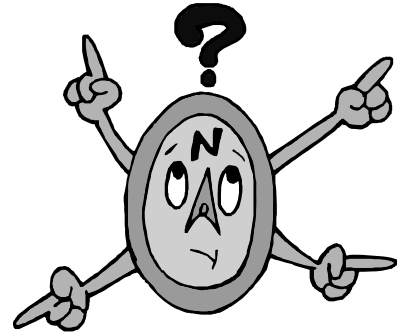
TUTORING

Every day in school you will be learning new information. What about the day that you learn something new in school that you just don't get? Well at Pocantico, every day during 9th period there will be a teacher with one responsibility. That is the responsibility of helping you get it. Please plan to make it a habit to stay for tutoring whenever you can use this valuable help. This room is only open for students who need academic assistance.

LOSING YOUR TRAIL

"What good is academic learning if young people don't learn to become contributing members of society?"

Jane Nelson



POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL-WIDE RULES

- You will keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
- You will treat yourself and others with respect and kindness.
- You will follow the direction of all staff members.

PURPOSE OF RULES

Occasionally students lose their way in school and make poor decisions. You are old enough to understand why schools have rules. Schools have rules so that:

- All students have a safe journey during their adventure here at Pocantico Hills.
- All students are provided the optimal environment for learning to take place.
- The rights of all students and adults working here are protected.
- All students understand the limits and structure of the school.
- All students can identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and learn to make good choices.

POCANTICO'S CODE OF CONDUCT

***"A law is valuable not because it is a law but because there is right in it."
Henry Ward Beecher***

Students at Pocantico Hills will....

SHOW RESPECT TO THOSE AROUND THEM

You will NOT:

- Use foul language or harass others. There is no place at Pocantico Hills for any insults or language which degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, handicap, physical or mental condition, or ethnic group.
- Threaten the safety of others, fight, or attempt to overpower any other student.
- Be discourteous, insubordinate, or uncooperative to any adult in our school.
- Throw any object or food or spit in any direction in the school building or cafeteria.
- Deface, destroy, or steal personal or school property.

BE RESPONSIBLE

You will NOT:

- Disrupt the learning of others through misbehavior.
- Run in the halls, trip anyone, or "play fight." These activities are both unsafe and interfere with the learning of others.
- Be late or unprepared for class.
- Fail to attend an appointment with a teacher or fail to serve an assigned detention.
- Chew gum.
- Violate any rule established by your classroom teacher.

DO THE RIGHT THING

You will NOT:

- Cheat on or plagiarize any assignment, report, or test. This is an important point for you to remember, especially when you are researching a topic. Always credit the source of your information, including internet sites. Ask for help if you are unsure.
- Demonstrate inappropriate behavior during school assemblies or after-school activities.
- Bring any alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs into this building or onto school grounds.
- Show excessive or inappropriate displays of affection to another student.
- Dress or groom yourself in a way that is distracting to others and disruptive to the educational process.
- Engage in gambling or betting for money.

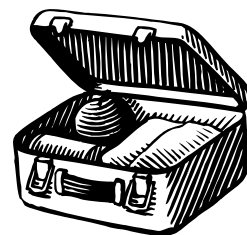
CONSEQUENCES FOR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

"In order to get Respect, you must give Respect."

If at any time you lose your way this year, there will be a range of consequences that will help you stop and hopefully make better decisions next time. The ranges of possible consequences are:

WORKING DETENTION

If you do not hand in your homework on the day it is due, or if you do not complete the assignment to your teacher's satisfaction, your teacher may ask you to fill out a Working Detention Slip. You will then be required to stay in study hall 9th period and complete the assignment. You will be assigned an after-school behavioral detention if you skip the working detention.



AFTER-SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL DETENTION

Your teacher may also assign a behavioral detention if you make a really poor choice in your behavior. Behavioral detentions will be assigned for either one or two days after school and will be held 9th period.

The referring teacher will fill out a behavioral detention form. Your parents will be notified by the office if you have been assigned a behavioral detention. During behavioral detention, you must complete a "Habits of Mind" worksheet to make sure this situation is not repeated. You will also lose the right to participate in any after school activity the day the behavioral detention is assigned.

These kinds of behaviors will automatically result in a behavioral detention:

- Repeated disruption of the learning process
- Acts of disrespect to any Pocantico staff
- Acts of destruction to the school building or another student's property
- Cruel or prolonged teasing
- Throwing food in the cafeteria
- Vulgar or inappropriate language
- Assembly program or athletic program misconduct
- Inappropriate pushing or touching of a classmate
- Failure to attend any assigned working lunch or detention
- Any other violation deemed worthy of detention by a teacher or school administrator

ROLE OF GUARDIAN ANGELS IN DISCIPLINE

At the discretion of the teacher and an administrator, certain low level detentions may be eligible for a negotiation by a Guardian Angel, on your behalf, once every twenty weeks.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Occasionally, a student's behavior is serious enough to require that the student be isolated from classmates. The student serving an in-school suspension should get his or her books in the morning and report to the office before homeroom. Parents will be notified both verbally and by mail when their child has been assigned an in-school suspension. In all cases of suspension, students may not participate in any school activity, including field trips, during the period of suspension. In addition, a student who begins a multiple day suspension before a vacation, holiday, or weekend may not participate in school activities for the duration of that vacation, holiday, or weekend. For most in-school suspensions, the students will be required to meet with their parents and a school administrator before re-entering the classroom. In-school suspensions can last from one to five days.

You should expect an automatic in-school suspension to be given for the following behaviors:

- Receiving a 6th day of behavioral detention in any 20-week section of the calendar year
- Deliberately skipping a behavioral detention
- Insubordination to the reasonable request of an adult
- Fighting (a minimum of two days in-school suspension)
- Theft (restitution and a minimum of one-day in-school suspension)
- Pulling down or attempting to pull down the pants of another student. ("pantsing")
- Any consistent pattern of repeating infractions after corrective measures were attempted
- Play fighting where there is physical contact

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

If a student's behavior jeopardizes the safety of that student or others, the school will take steps to send that student home. This can last from one to five days. This decision is based on the judgment of the school personnel involved, and parents are notified both verbally and by mail. A parent conference is necessary to readmit that student to school. An out-of-school suspension could also take place as the school looks for a more appropriate academic setting for the student.

EXPULSION

If a student's behavior is such that attendance at Pocantico Hills School is not appropriate and a suspension of greater than five days is necessary, the student will have the opportunity for a hearing before the superintendent or his designee. The student may be represented by counsel, testify on his or her own behalf, and present witnesses and other evidence in his or her defense. If, as a result of the hearing, the student is permanently suspended, arrangements are made for instruction elsewhere.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE CODE OF CONDUCT

Please be aware that school administrators will determine the extent of your involvement in the examples below and will assess corrective action and penalties based upon their judgment. Corrective action and penalties are not necessarily progressive or negotiable. However, repeated misconduct can result in more serious penalties or consequences.

PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT AND RANGE OF PENALTIES

ILLEGAL OR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Consistent attendance represents each student's most basic responsibility as a member of the Pocantico Hills School community. Excused reasons for missing school include: personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observances, court appearances, approved school activities, or other reasons that are pre-approved by the principal. We regard a cumulative absence rate of 20% as a guideline for determining a pattern of excessive absence.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, home visit, counseling, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, legal action

PERSISTENT TARDINESS

Lateness to school or class may have an adverse effect on your academic performance. In addition, it is disruptive to the teaching/learning process and puts an additional burden on you to make up the work you missed. Students who arrive at school after 8:20 a.m. must report to the nurse's office and receive a late pass to class.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, home visit, counseling, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, suspension, legal action

TRESPASSING

You should never be in an unauthorized area in the school building or on school property without permission or without a legitimate school-related reason for being there.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

FIGHTING/PLAY FIGHTING

Any physical altercation during school, on school property, or at school-sponsored functions/activities that endangers the physical safety of another will not be tolerated.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Automatic parent contact and in-school suspension for both students of at least one day unless it is determined one party is a true victim; if the behavior continues: out-of-school suspension, legal action, expulsion

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Any act that interferes with the rights of others in the teaching-learning environment on school property or at school-related activities will be subject to disciplinary action. Some examples include yelling, running, or the misuse of 911.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

SWEARING/VULGARITY

Swearing or abusive language and/or gestures that are profane, lewd, or vulgar toward anyone on school property or at school-related activities will not be tolerated.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

HARASSMENT

Harassment comes in many damaging forms and has no place in our school or at any school-sponsored activities. This can include any verbal or physical action that is threatening, intimidating, ridiculing, embarrassing, or damaging to a fellow student.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome flirtation, sexual advances, propositions, continual or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, use of sexually degrading words, the display of sexually suggestive pictures, and harassment based on sexual orientation.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

RACIAL HARASSMENT

Racial harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwanted verbal comments, racial name-calling, racial or ethnic slurs, slogans, and graffiti.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

BUS MISCONDUCT

You are required to conduct yourself on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. In addition, you are not permitted to behave in a manner which threatens someone's safety or the safe and orderly operation of the bus.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of bus privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, expulsion

CAFETERIA MISCONDUCT

Every student is entitled to an orderly, respectful, and calm cafeteria environment. If you violate school rules in the cafeteria, you will be disciplined.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of cafeteria privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, expulsion

INAPPROPRIATE SHOWING OF AFFECTION

Outward displays of affection are inappropriate in the school environment.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, in-school suspension

INSUBORDINATION

The failure to comply with the reasonable requests of an administrator, teacher, staff member, or chaperone at school-related activity will not be tolerated.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Automatic in-school suspension; repeated infractions: out-of-school suspension, expulsion

TOBACCO

The distribution, possession, or use of snuff, chewing tobacco, cigarettes, or other tobacco products is prohibited at any time on school property or at school-related activities.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Immediate parent contact, administrator's conference, suspension, exclusion from extra-curricular activities for the suspension period, legal action, expulsion

ALCOHOL

The distribution, possession or use of alcohol or being under its influence at any time on school property or at school-related activities will not be tolerated.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Immediate parent contact, administrator's conference, suspension, exclusion from extra-curricular activities for the suspension period, legal action, expulsion

DRUGS

The distribution, possession, use, or being under the influence of any controlled substance on school property or at school-related activities is prohibited. These substances as defined by law include, but are not limited to, PCP, cocaine, crack, LSD, steroids, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, or any prescription drug not prescribed for the student in whose possession it is found. You may not take over-the-counter medication in excess of the recommended dosage, nor can you take medication when your condition doesn't necessitate it. Finally, you may not

inappropriately use other substances, such as glue, or be in possession of drug paraphernalia at any time.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Immediate parent contact, administrator's conference, suspension, exclusion from extra-curricular activities for the suspension period, notification of legal authorities, expulsion

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating is obtaining or giving answers to another before or during a quiz or exam or copying or allowing another to copy all or part of an assignment. Plagiarism is the use of language, ideas or thoughts from another and representing them as your own original work.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, confiscation, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, loss of credit, failing grade, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

THEFT AND VANDALISM

You may not take the property of others without permission. In addition, you may not intentionally damage, deface or destroy school property or the personal property of a student, teacher, employee, or administrator.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, restitution, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

IMPROPER DRESS

Any attire which endangers physical health or safety, limits participation in activities, or is disruptive to the educational process is not permitted. Some examples of prohibited dress include: very short shorts and skirts (your shorts and skirts should be no shorter than three inches above the knee), tops with an exposed midriff, pants worn below the waist, bathing suits, undershirts with no covering shirts, clothing revealing the student's underclothing; hats and jackets worn in the school. In addition clothes which promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs or with violent, obscene and inflammatory comments on them are also prohibited.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: The student will be required to modify their appearance and, if necessary, replace the offending item with an acceptable one. Any student refusing to do so shall be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension. In the situation of repeat violations, students will be considered insubordinate.

IMPROPER ITEMS IN SCHOOL

You may not bring items to school which may pose a danger to others or may disrupt the educational process. Examples include, but are not limited to, smoke bombs, firecrackers, roller blades, in-line skates, skateboards, wheeled sneakers, and scooters.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, confiscation, detention, parent contact, loss of privileges, administrator's conference, counseling, suspension, legal action, expulsion

INAPPROPRIATE COMPUTER USE

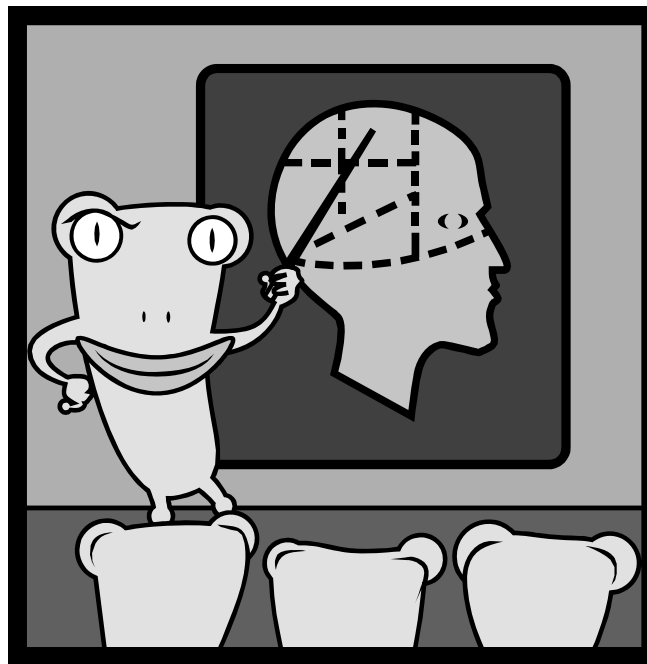
The misuse of any computer or electronic device includes any unauthorized use of computers, software, or network accounts, accessing inappropriate websites, downloading software or viruses, tampering with files or any other violation of the district's acceptable use policy.

Possible Corrective Action/Penalty Range: Reprimand, detention, parent contact, loss of user privileges, administrator's conference, suspension, legal action, expulsion

WEAPONS

Bringing any weapon or what appears to be a weapon into school or onto school grounds is prohibited. A weapon is any device, instrument, material or substance that is readily capable of causing injury.

Corrective Action/Penalty Range: suspension, legal action, expulsion



Middle School: Welcome to the Adventure!

COMPARING 5th GRADE AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

*How is being in 5th grade the **same** as being in middle school?*

- Both 5th graders and 6th graders share the same teachers. Each teacher specializes in one specific content area.
- Both 5th graders and middle school students follow an individual weekly schedule.
- Both 5th graders and middle school students use their locker as their home base. Students are instructed to use their lockers first thing in the morning to get their morning books and supplies and after lunch to get their afternoon books and supplies.
- Both 5th graders and middle school students walk on their own from one class period to the next.
- Both 5th graders and middle school students must stop at their locker at the end of the day to gather all books and papers needed for their homework that night.
- There will be some joint extracurricular activities shared by 5th and 6th grade students.
- Both 5th grade students and middle school students are encouraged to attend 9th period tutoring if they need help with their work.

*How is being in 5th grade **different** from being in middle school?*

- In middle school you attend 4th period rotation classes; in 5th grade you have weekly specials.
- Starting in 6th grade, you may practice with Pocantico sports teams; in 5th grade you may not practice with Pocantico teams.
- 5th grade band and chorus play at the elementary concert; 6th grade band and chorus play at the middle school concerts.
- Starting in 6th grade you may vote and run for office in the Student Government, in 5th grade you can not vote or run for office.
- In middle school you go to dances; in 5th grade you may not attend dances.
- 5th graders still take part in Intermediate House activities like "Jump Rope for Heart."
- Starting in 6th grade you are required to attend working detention 9th period if you do not complete an assignment. This begins the first week of school. In 5th grade, attending working detention will not begin until second semester.

